

## **We Look to Christ Alone for Salvation**

The Bible tells us to look at ourselves. That is the Law! When we look at ourselves in the mirror of God's Law, we see only sin. The Law teaches the certainty of damnation. Then, the Bible tells us to look at Christ. That is the Gospel! Without Christ, damnation is certain. With Christ, salvation is certain.

The Gospel directs us to look outside ourselves, to look at Christ. Jesus compared Himself to the brass serpent that Moses put on the pole (John 3:14-16; Numbers 21:4-9). The Israelites had been bitten by snakes. Those who looked within themselves to fight off the venom died. Those who looked outside themselves, at the serpent on the pole, lived.

We do not have within ourselves any spiritual resources that can save us. Those who trust themselves are lost. Those who trust Christ are saved. Christian faith is not faith in faith. Christian faith is not faith in the Christian. Christian faith is faith in Christ.

Only Lutheranism teaches the Gospel purely (those who do not proclaim it purely are not Lutheran, even if they claim to be). We rejoice that there are Christians who are not Lutherans. Through the Gospel, the Holy Spirit has brought them to believe the Gospel and trust Christ. But they are in danger in their fellowships, for they are told to look to themselves for salvation. We should be told to look to Christ alone for salvation.

Christian faith and hope are based only on Christ and the salvation He has procured for us outside ourselves. Salvation is brought to us from outside ourselves by God's Spirit through the Gospel in all its forms (including Absolution, Baptism, Communion). Dr. C. F. W. Walther said: "*The characteristic feature of our dear Evangelical Lutheran Church is her objectivity, which means that her entire teaching is designed to keep man from seeking salvation within himself, in the powers of his nature and will, in anything he does or is, and to bring him to seek salvation outside of himself. The teaching of all other churches is of a subjective character; it trains man to base his salvation upon himself.*"

May God keep us faithful to the true Biblical Gospel to life everlasting. May He cause His Word to be proclaimed freely to the ends of the earth, to the end of the world!